(c) the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The text of the draft for the proposed PTA, Rules of Origin, the Operational Certifications Procedures and Wish Lists have been discussed by the two sides. The Empowered Negotiating Team is scheduled to hold the next round of talks in New Delhi during February 23-25, 2006.

FDI in small and medium scale industries

†317. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:
SHRIMATI KAMALA MANHAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether proposals to increase the limit of Foreign Direct Investment in small and medium scale industries is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the percentage of investment limit fixed during the year 2005-06 and whether any proposal to increase the said limit in the ensuing years is under consideration; and

(c) the details of action so far/to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (c) At present, there is no proposal under consideration to increase the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in the small-scale industries. There is, at present, no separate category industries classified as medium industry. The FDI policy is reviewed on a continuing basis to improve the investment climate in the country, consistent with the objective of accelerated growth of the economy.

Protest against import of gold

318 SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether gold is being imported;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether protest is being made against import of gold; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The total quantity and value of Gold imported during April 2005 to September 2005 is 442.87 Tonnes and Rs. 27080.88 crores respectively.

(c) and (d) No protest has been received against the import of gold.

Insurance scheme for seafood exporters

319. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India has designed a special insurance scheme for seafood exporters which would cover the risk of rejection of consignment particularly by western countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the scheme will be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India have agreed in principle to provide an additional cover provision under the existing Credit Insurance Policies for covering rejection risks arising due to presence of antibiotic residues in shrimps exported to European Union and Japan. The proposed cover is under preparation and will be introduced once the necessary approvals are in place.

Trade agreements with different countries

320. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Agreement and MoUs entered into with various countries in the last two years;

(b) whether enough safeguards have been made to take care of the domestic industries;